

Antarctic Sledging Biscuits

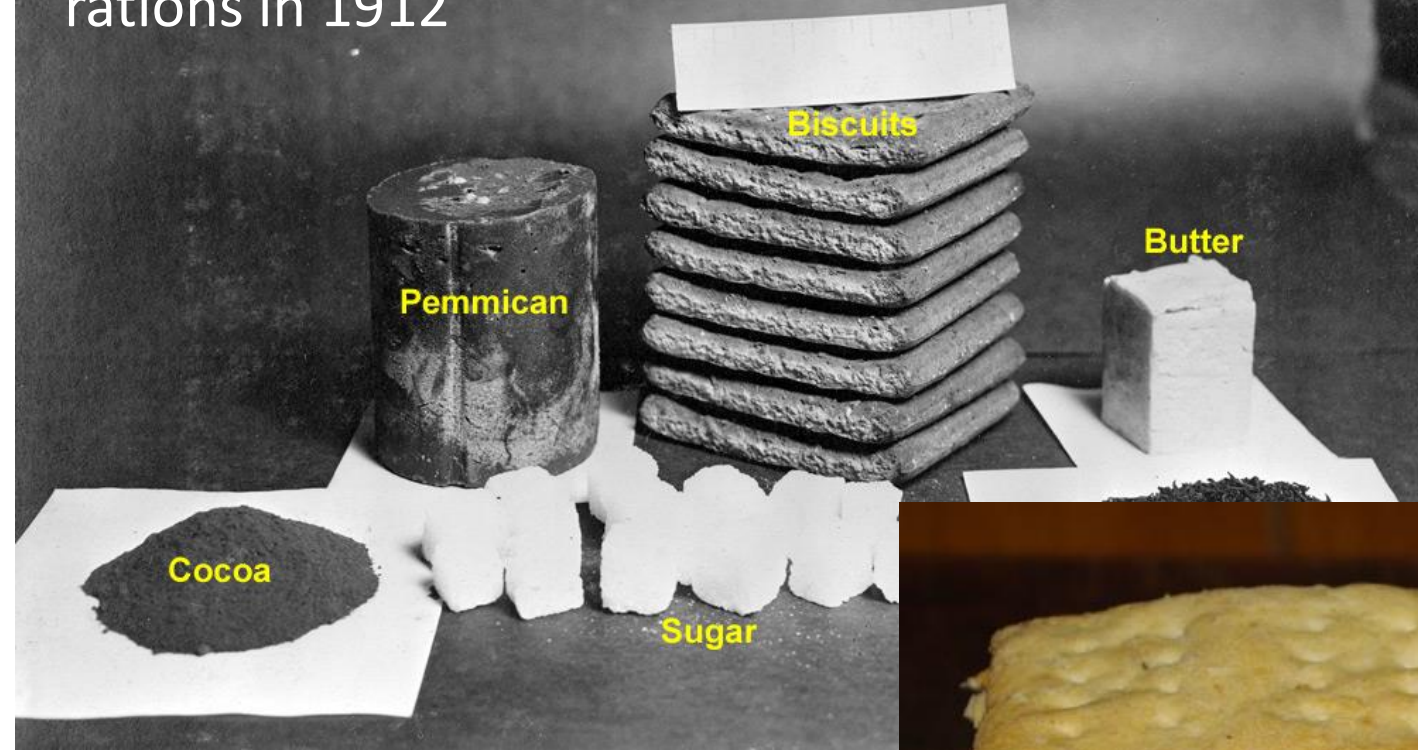
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Sledging biscuits in Antarctica are one of the two foods that Antarctic exploration was built on, (the other is pemmican) they are still in use today, eaten by people who are working away from bases in Antarctica as a dietary staple.

Antarctic sledging rations in 1912



They are derived from hardtack or “ships biscuits”. A simple, physically resilient, nutritious, long lasting, compact food stuff that is easy to make. It takes the place of bread as the standard carbohydrate source when away from base.

Sledging biscuits 2015



The basic recipe is very simple

150g plain white flour

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

30g butter

50ml cold water

Antarctic explorers would modify this in various ways by using wholemeal instead of white flour, by adding oats or by leaving out the baking powder for instance.

Mix the ingredients together in a bowl, add a little water to start, add more if needed to make a soft but not sticky dough.

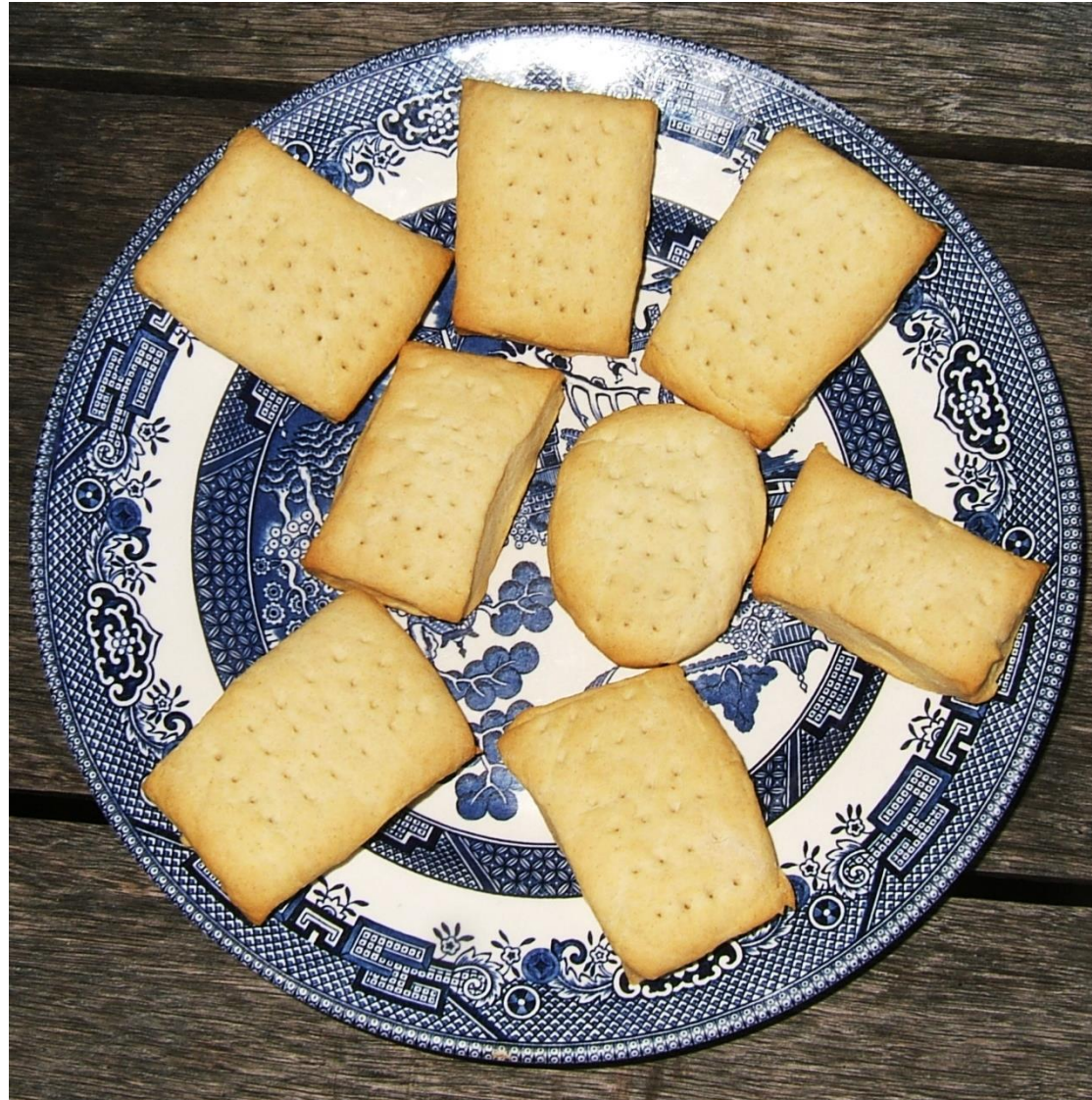
Roll it out to about half an inch or 1cm thick.



Cut the dough into eight equal sized pieces, place on a baking sheet and prick each one gently with a fork 5 times



Bake for about 20 mins at 190°C or until the biscuits are a pale golden colour. If you added baking powder they will rise a little.



These are eaten when away from the main base in place of bread, with butter on its own, with butter + marmite, with cheese or in any way you would eat bread



100 years ago, sledging biscuits were also broken up into a pan of melted snow and pemmican (meat jerky finely ground and mixed with clarified fat) to make a stew called “hoosh” which tastes far better than it looks and is very high in energy.



Alternative ways to make sledging biscuits

Flour + Salt	Baking soda	Butter	Other
white (120g)	yes	yes	oats (30g)
white (120g)	yes	no	oats (30g)
white	yes	yes	no
white	yes	no	no
white (120g)	no	yes	oats (30g)
white (120g)	no	no	oats (30g)
white	no	yes	no
white	no	no	no
wholemeal (120g)	yes	yes	oats (30g)
wholemeal (120g)	yes	no	oats (30g)
wholemeal	yes	yes	no
wholemeal	yes	no	no
wholemeal (120g)	no	yes	oats (30g)
wholemeal (120g)	no	no	oats (30g)
wholemeal	no	yes	no
wholemeal	no	no	no

Questions

1. Why are sledging biscuits used rather than bread? – 3 reasons
2. What is the point of using wholemeal rather than plain white flour?
3. What is the value of adding oats to the mixture?
4. Why are high energy foods needed in the Antarctic?